



United States  
of America

# Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE *107<sup>th</sup>* CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

WASHINGTON, MONDAY, JUNE 11, 2001

## *Senate*

### **BETTER EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS ACT**

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I thank both Senator Landrieu and Senator Lieberman for the leadership they have shown in getting us on the right track--I think the track we intended to be on.

A friend of mine who used to be my education adviser when I was Governor of Delaware for a number of years used to say that all of us can learn but some of us learn differently. Some of us learn faster than others, but all of us can learn.

We are talking about title I, which is a program the Federal Government introduced some 35 years ago to really make sure that young people in our schools--very young people and not so young people--who need extra help in learning to read are going to get it. If they need extra help in math, they are going to get it. Our job is to make sure they get that extra help which they need to enable them to be successful.

We are seeking through the debate in the last couple of weeks, and certainly the debate through this week, to redefine the Federal role in education. Nobody here believes the role of the Federal Government in education is to run our schools in Delaware, Nebraska, or in any other State. The role of the Federal Government, as Senator Lieberman said, is to try to help level that playing field so that all kids have a real shot at meeting the academic standards that have been established in their States.

In the course of the debate on this bill, we are agreeing on a number of important

principles. One is that we ought to be investing more money and to transition Federal resources to raise student achievement. We ought to give that money to schools so that school districts have more flexibility with fewer strings, that we can provide more money and fewer strings, that we ought to require results and demand results. That means accountability and consequences for schools and students who do well, as well as for those who do not do well.

Another thing on which we agree is the need for parents to have greater choices in where they send their kids to school--to have a public school choice and charter schools as well.

During the course of this debate, one of the things I have learned--and Senator Lieberman just said it again--is that for a lot of our schools around the country that have a fair amount of poverty, we don't fund title I. It is a strange thing. In a school where the level of poverty is over 50 percent, over half the kids are getting free or reduced-price lunches. That is a school where we can provide title I money and extra learning time for kids who need it. But in about 20 percent of our schools, we don't do that at all.

Nobody here is interested in throwing money at the problem. We are interested in investing money in programs that work, especially where the need is the greatest.

I have stood here on the floor in the last couple of weeks and talked about three

programs that we know work where we don't invest the money we ought to be investing. The first is Head Start. We provide Head Start funding for fewer than half of the eligible 3- and 4-year-olds in this country. States such as Delaware and Ohio have provided extra money on their own to help make it possible for all 4-year-olds in Delaware, for example, to be in the Head Start Program. But nationally, the Federal Government provides Head Start money for fewer than half of the eligible 3- and 4-year-olds. We know it works. We just do not provide the money.

Another program is the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act and Federal money for special education programs. We are supposed to, by agreement, provide up to 40 percent of the funds in States across America for students in special education programs. Do we do that? No. We don't provide 40 percent, or 30 percent, or 20, or even 10 percent of the funding. We know it works. But we don't invest the money.

The third program we are talking about today with title I is the Extra Learning Time Program, which the Federal Government funds. We don't fund money for every child who is eligible for the program. We don't provide extra money and time for even half of the kids who are eligible. It is one out of three; that is all.

In a situation where we know the program works and we know that if we invest the money we will raise student achievement, in the situation where we have a little more money in terms of our budget surplus than we have had in recent years, having taken some of that money off the table through a tax cut--we don't have unlimited money--I think it is incumbent on us, as we increase the spending, to spend a little extra money in this title I for Extra Learning Time. Let's spend it where the kids are most needy. Let's target that money

where it will make the most difference. It is really common sense.

Let me close by saying this. I talk a lot about Delaware. That is the State I know most about, just as other Members know about Louisiana, Nebraska, or their respective States. I visited a little school in southwestern Delaware a week or so ago, West Seaford Elementary. I met with the principal, a number of the teachers, and an administrator or two. We talked about a variety of ways in which we are trying to raise student achievement. I will mention a couple of them.

There is a State program in the department that provides services for children. Their emphasis is to put in that school a social worker--a family crisis therapist who is a go-between for that school and the families who are in a crisis to work; a go-between to help make sure whatever is going wrong at home gets fixed--the child has a better learning environment at home, and the parents will be able to work with the kids at school.

I met with a woman who coordinates the mentoring program. She comes in every week and works with kids to help them in this school. There was also a teacher in the room funded by smaller classroom size appropriations. In other words, we provide money for smaller classrooms. They use that money to hire extra teachers. There was a lady there who was funded out of that. Finally, there was a title I teacher there who worked with kids, especially with their reading.

These were part of the team that works very successfully at West Seaford to make it possible for just about every kid to reach the standards we set in our State in reading and writing and math.

One of the best things we have done in this legislation is provide some extra money and provide more flexibly so that schools

such as West Seaford can use those disparate sources of State and Federal and local moneys in ways that they know will work to help their kids do better.

While I applaud the fact that we are providing extra money through this authorization bill--and we are going to provide that money with more flexibility—we demand accountability.

Hopefully, tomorrow with the Carper-Gregg amendment, we will work a little more on poverty parents through public

schools and charter schools. I think it is important, as we spend those extra dollars, to make sure they go to the schools where the need is the greatest.

In this day and age where one out of every five schools and where well over half of the kids living in poverty don't have access to the help they get in title I, that is wrong. We can fix it here. My hope is that by agreeing to this amendment, we will do just that.

Thank you, Mr. President.